

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method for improving the long term stability of biodiesel, comprising:
 - (a) forming a reaction mixture comprising a crude methyl ester, by transesterification of a vegetable or animal fat or oil with methanol,
 - (b) forming a layer containing the crude methyl ester of step (a), and separating the layer from the rest of the reaction mixture,
 - (c) intensively inline mixing the crude methyl ester layer obtained in step (b) at temperatures between 25 and 60°C ~~with a strong acid or~~ with a mixture of a strong acid and a complex former, to form an emulsion, and
 - (d) separating an ester layer from the emulsion formed in step (c), and then subjecting the separated ester layer to a thorough water wash and a subsequent drying.

2. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to claim 1, wherein hydrochloric acid, sulfuric acid, p-toluenesulfonic acid or phosphoric acid are employed as a strong acid, and ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid or citric acid are employed as a complex former, ~~if present~~.

3. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 1, wherein the water wash is carried out in a wash column according to the counter current principle or by means of a mechanically intensive mixer.